

# The MRCGP examination

The following questions were set as part of the examination for membership, 28 October 1986.

## Practice topic question paper

*Time allowed two hours*

*All questions are to be answered*

### Question 1

Discuss the problems a 63-year-old man may face on retirement, and the role of his general practitioner in caring for him.

### Question 2

Why are some general practitioners' appointments systems unsatisfactory?

### Question 3

Mrs Brown, aged 55 years, has recently been discharged from hospital with a severe hemiplegia following a recent cerebrovascular accident. Discuss the problems and their management.

## Modified essay question (MEQ)

*Time allowed one hour and thirty minutes*

### Instructions

1. *There are eight questions in this MEQ paper.*
2. *Answers should be legible and concise. Total time allowed is one hour and thirty minutes.*
3. *Answers should be written in the space provided. If more room is required use the reverse side of the question sheet.*
4. *You are advised not to alter your answers after completing the whole MEQ and not to look through the book before you start. This may distort your natural assessment of the case and cause you to lose marks.*
5. *The MEQ is a test of your practical approach to a developing general practice problem and as such you could gain more marks for your management of the problem than for your pure factual knowledge.*
6. *The available marks vary between one question and another; you are advised to work steadily through and not delay too long on any one question.*
7. *Each page of the MEQ is marked independently. You should therefore answer each question specifically, even if this answer involves repetition of part of an earlier answer.*
8. *As a rough guide, it is indicated when you are approximately half-way through this paper.*

● Before your next patient enters you look at her problem card created by your recently retired partner, whose patient she had been. (This pink card entitled 'past history and problem card' is on your desk. Please make sure that you read both sides carefully.) She has not seen you before. When Mrs Smith comes in she complains of generalized weakness for which you can find no cause. In the course of the consultation, you elicit that she is worried because her merchant seaman husband seems obsessed with the belief that he might have AIDS. She asks if he has consulted you recently.

What would you wish to cover in the ensuing discussion?

● Some weeks later Mrs Smith attends complaining of pins and needles in her hands and feet. On full examination you can find no abnormality, and the history together with your previous investigations confirms your impression that this is not an organic disorder.

- (a) Speculate about the origins of this patient's symptoms.
- (b) How can you help her?

● The consultation ends unsatisfactorily. The following day Mr Smith calls to see you, demanding an explanation of his wife's symptoms. He tells you he has made arrangements for her to see a homeopathic practitioner.

In what ways might you respond? What are the pros and cons of each?

● Six months later Mrs Smith complains of loss of vision in one eye. She sees your partner, who suspects she has retrobulbar neuritis, and refers her to a neurologist. The diagnosis of multiple sclerosis is confirmed by his clinical examination and supported by sensory, visual and auditory evoked responses. Later Mr and Mrs Smith come to see you to discuss the neurologist's report.

List the areas you would wish to consider with them at this consultation.

● Some time later Mrs Smith brings Debbie, now aged 6 years, because of a vaginal discharge. She (Debbie) has recently started wetting the bed again and is off her food.

- (a) List the possible causes of this presentation.
- (b) Outline how you would manage this consultation.

● Two days later Debbie's schoolteacher phones you in distress. She tells you that Debbie has implied that her father has interfered with her in some way.

What problems does this pose for a general practitioner? How would you deal with them?

● Mr Smith deserts his family and returns to sea. A few days later, Mrs Smith comes to see you. She implies that you have been responsible, to some extent, for the break-up of her marriage. She asks to see her notes to ensure that there is no information recorded which might prejudice her future doctors against her, as she intends to change.

Discuss the different ways in which you might cope with this request to see her notes and the probable consequences of these.

● After consideration, Mrs Smith remains on your list. At 11 pm one Saturday evening you receive a telephone call from an anxious neighbour of the Smith family who has been alerted by Debbie knocking on her door. Apparently Mrs Smith is unconscious from an overdose of an antidepressant you had prescribed. You arrange admission to hospital and appropriate care for Debbie. The following morning you telephone the hospital and discover that Mrs Smith has died.

Describe the thoughts and feelings you might have at this time and the ways you could cope with them.